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MORPC Honors Five Local Groups' Air Quality Efforts With New Clean Air Awards

(COLUMBUS, May 11, 2006) – The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) honored five area groups as the first recipients of the commission's Clean Air Awards yesterday during MORPC's Clean Air Fair in the Arena District.

The recipients were selected in recognition of their efforts in the past year toward improving the quality of central Ohio's air.

This year's Clean Air Award winners are:

- **American Electric Power (AEP)**, in recognition of the company's initiative and efforts in establishing a strong vanpooling and ridesharing presence among employees. AEP conducted a comprehensive survey among employees to identify their transportation perceptions and habits and their attitudes toward alternative transportation options.
- **Center of Science and Industry (COSI)**, for COSI's participation in MORPC's Prairie Project, converting outdoor areas to a prairie meadow and prairie garden, demonstrating an alternative to the resource-intensive industrial lawn and promoting an understanding of natural ecosystems. The benefits of this include cleaner air, water conservation and increased biodiversity.
- **Central Ohio Breathing Association (COBA)**, in recognition of their campaign, "Be Aware of Dirty Air," which informs pregnant women and mothers of infants through phone calls about the dangers of pollution and secondhand smoke, protecting the health of the region's littlest residents. COBA launched the campaign in response to Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman's study reporting as many as nine percent of Franklin County's children suffer from asthma.
- **City of Columbus**, in recognition of the city's anti-idling policy, enacted in the December 2005 Get Green Columbus Campaign, which prohibits city vehicles' idling. This policy reduces exhaust emissions, fuel usage and wear on city vehicles. The city also is proceeding with plans to make its buildings more

green, with green design and technology used for park buildings, planned municipal buildings, administrative offices and a green housing development.

- **Commuters of MORPC's RideSolutions Vanpool Program**, in recognition of RideSolution's longest continuously operating vanpool, Van #20206, which has spent nearly 17 years on a route between Mount Vernon and downtown Columbus, enjoying camaraderie while reducing congestion and fuel consumption.

MORPC plans to present Clean Air Awards annually during the Clean Air Fair each spring.

MORPC is a voluntary association of 41 local governments in central Ohio serving the region through planning, direct service, public policy information and innovative programming and intergovernmental coordinating services in the areas of transportation, land use, energy conservation, the environment and housing.